



## **FABRIC UTILIZATION AND RECYCLING PRACTICES IN SEWN PRODUCTS**

### **MANUFACTURING**

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Good fabric utilization (>95% of fabric surface) is the primary driver of source reduction waste in the sewn products industry. This project focused on a quantitative measurement of fabric utilization and how that measurement could be used to characterize the recycling programs of sewn products manufacturers.

A structured questionnaire was developed and mailed to 450 sewn products manufacturers with 20 or more employees. The adjusted sample size was 254 manufacturers. Eighty-eight respondents returned the survey (35% response rate based on the adjusted sample).

Frequencies or means were calculated for all survey items. ANOVAs were used to determine whether differences existed among fabric utilization level and organizational characteristics. Fabric utilization levels ranged from below 89% (low utilization) to 98-100% (high utilization). Sixty-seven organizations reported utilization levels of less than 95% and 18 companies reported utilization levels greater than 96%. Differences were found using the dependent variable of fabric utilization level.

Using the results of the study a recycling assessment was developed incorporating recycling barriers, opportunities, incentives and strategies. This recycling assessment has implications to characterize the entire sewn product industry and help specific sewn product manufacturers implement source reduction recycling programs.